

# TRAIL & Landscape

A PUBLICATION CONCERNED WITH  
NATURAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION



# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Editors: Anne Hanes  
18 Briarcliffe Drive,  
Ottawa, Ont. K1J 6E4  
Sharon Godkin  
Joyce Reddoch

Production Staff:  
Marjorie Bond  
Leone Brown  
Dorothy Greene  
Rosemary Wallbank

Business and Production Manager: Harry A. Thomson

## THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB - Founded 1879 -

President: Dr. Ewen C.D. Todd, 1818 Paisley Ave., Ottawa  
Corr. Secretary: P.J. Narraway, Box 3264 Stn. C, Ottawa

Objectives of the Club: To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

Club Publications: *THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST*, devoted to publishing research in natural history. *TRAIL & LANDSCAPE*, a non-technical publication of general interest to local naturalists.

Field Trips, Lectures and other natural history activities are arranged for local members.  
See inside back cover.

### Membership Fees:

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP:	(per year)	\$7.00
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP:	(per year)	\$9.00
SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP:	(per year)	\$25.00
LIFE MEMBERSHIP:	(one payment)	\$200.00

Libraries and other institutions may subscribe to Trail & Landscape at the rate of \$7.00 per year (Vol.)

Apply for Membership to:

THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE,  
Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club,  
Box 3264, Postal Station "C",  
Ottawa, Canada K1Y 4J5

Second Class Mail - Registration #2777

# TRAIL *& Landscape*

Vol 10 No 4

Published by

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB  
Box 3264 Postal Station C,  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1Y 4J5

The First Year	- - - - -	82
S. Pawley		
European Frog-Bit - A Progress Report	-	87
A. Reddoch		
FISHES V. Brook Stickleback	- - -	90
D. McAllister, B. Coad		
Get the Point?	- - - - -	93
S. Hamill		
Henry Ami's OFNC Papers	- - - -	96
J. Reddoch		
More About Historical Boulders	- - -	100
J. Reddoch		
Spring Birds 1976	- - - - -	101
R. Foxall		
OFNC Early Fall Program	- - - - -	104



# The FIRST YEAR

Sally Pawley

There was a wonderful sense of purpose and excitement in the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club during its earliest years. Formed in 1879, the Club seemed to charge its members with a zeal which threw the new organization into a flurry of activity; activity which propelled the Club to an early stage of favourable recognition, both locally and nationally.

One wonders what circumstances create such an enthusiastic membership - why was there such an abundance of well-directed energy in those early days?

Undoubtedly one good reason could be found in the individuals of the Club. Ottawa had fairly recently become the capital of the Dominion and many of the country's top scientists were drawn to the government bureaus. Many of these men became active Club members; men like Lieutenant-Colonel W. White, the Club's first president; James Fletcher, the Club's founding father; John Macoun, Dominion Botanist; Dr. H.B. Small; Sanford Fleming and many others. Stories of these dedicated and energetic people stand on their own, and will be told another time.

The mood of the country must also have had a lot to do with the Club's early success. A new interest in science had been growing ever since 1857 when the American Association for the Advancement of Science met in Ottawa. Science slowly gained supporters and

devotees until, twenty years later, scientific knowledge was considered to be desirable and necessary. The time was ripe for such interest to be channeled into the naturalist club.

Six outings were taken during that first summer, several to the regular haunts of today's Club - Mer Bleue, Meach Lake and Britannia. Out of a membership of 80 the average attendance at these outings was 40, a number which challenges today's attendance! That summer, a joint excursion with the Montreal Natural History Society was made to Calumet. Ottawa members carried off all three prizes offered by the Montreal Society for botanical specimens.

On another day Dr. Wicksteed, an active member, took a group to Duck Island, seven miles below the city, in his steam yacht. A similar event was repeated the following year to Kettle Island, and this time "Members of the Club...(were)...permitted to bring the ladies and children of their families". The inclusion of ladies and children must have been a success for "the afternoon was agreeably spent there".

At a Dominion Exhibition that first summer six Club members received prizes or honourable mention for their entries. Collections of birds' eggs, fossils, shells, insects and plants were already bringing credit to a club that hadn't yet celebrated its first anniversary.

As a result of the summer's activities, the first lists of shells and flora in the Ottawa District were published. The following year the first bird lists appeared. These records can be found in the Club transactions.

Winter came, but by no means did the Club go into hibernation. Thirteen papers were delivered during the evening 'soirées' on topics ranging from 'The Connection of Botany with Mythology' to 'Land and Fresh Water Shells of the Ottawa Valley'. Out of 90 ordinary members there was an average attendance of 55 at the soirées. Great excitement was generated one evening when Dr. J.A. Grant dissected a human brain in front of an audience of 70.

At the conclusion of one soirée, one of the corresponding members, Professor John Macoun, was introduced to the group. Macoun made a "vigorous" speech suggesting that through the study of natural science one could train body and mind to greater and more prolonged activity than was possible through any other course of study. This spirit of dedication to natural history was to become synonymous with the name Macoun, and members were to one day hear much more from this man. Indeed Canada was to hear much more from this man, but that is another story.

At that time in Ottawa an active Literary and Scientific Society existed. It was in this Society's museum that the Naturalists' Club held their soirées. It was to this museum that Club members frequently contributed duplicate specimens or collections.

(...p 86)

---

#### Lieutenant-Colonel William White

first President of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club →  
as he appeared in 1901

Born in London, England in 1830, he came to Canada in 1854 and joined the Post Office Department, becoming Deputy Postmaster-General in 1888. He served in the militia for many years, and was a member of the Civil Service Commission of 1880. Although biographical material emphasizes his prominence in military and civil service fields rather than his contributions to natural history, his interests certainly included plants. His name appears as collector of an orchid specimen cited by Fletcher, and he spoke at a soirée, in the Club's second year, on the subject of the Lily Family. His wife, Elizabeth Keen White, made a series of fine watercolour paintings of native Canadian wildflowers.

Photo: Public Archives Canada



The Ottawa Literary and Scientific Society held regular 'conversaciones' for their program, and as "a token of the good feeling" between the two clubs the naturalists took charge of one of the evenings. There was a series of chemical experiments, an essay on coal read by W.H. Harrington, recitations by two members and an exhibition of natural history specimens.

In return the OL&S Society included two natural history lectures in their winter course of science classes. Elementary lectures in Botany and Entomology were added for OFNC members. The lectures were "well attended".

The fact that Ottawa could support two such industrious clubs would seem to indicate the prevailing interest in science at that time.

The Club's scientific publication, born in the first year of the Club's existence, still survives today, almost a hundred years later. Now known as the Canadian Field-Naturalist, the journal has changed considerably in purpose and content. In the beginning it was known as "Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, Transactions" and was a publication of all papers delivered at the soirées dealing with the original research of members or with the natural history of the Ottawa District. The publication was so very well received by the scientific community that the pride voiced by First Vice-President Fletcher will be understood:

"(the first transactions) are certainly most creditable to the Club, an opinion which has been expressed by other societies in different parts of the country, as well as by several magazines, among others Science Gossip in England and the Popular Science Monthly in the U.S."

Today's members wishing to catch a bit of the zeal characterizing those early days of the Club would enjoy an evening's browse through the 'Transactions'. They are available in the reference section of Ottawa's downtown public library. These records contain entertaining and informative readings and allow the reader to share in the excitement of the earliest days of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club.



# EUROPEAN FROG-BIT

## a progress report

Allan Reddoch

Two years ago in August, while looking at the pond on the east side of the Anderson Road between the Dolman and Borthwick Ridges, I noticed a large number of small flowers on the water among the cattails by the roadside. The flowers were white with yellow centers and stood a little above the water, which was covered with water-lily-like leaves about 2 inches in diameter. Such a distinctive and attractive plant should have been easy to identify, but neither Peterson's Field Guide nor Marie-Victorin's Flore Laurentienne was of any help. Then, by chance, I came across Hotchkiss' Common Marsh, Underwater and Floating Leaved Plants of the United States and Canada and learned that this was the European Frog-bit (Hydrocharis morsus-ranae). The floras of Britton and Brown and of Gray do not mention it.

Next, I heard of an article by Bill Dore from 1968, which some CFN readers will remember, where he gives the story of this plant from its introduction to Ottawa in 1932, up to 1968. Since the story is well told by



Dore, only a brief outline need be given here. The plant was placed in some ponds near Dow's Lake at the Experimental Farm in 1932. By 1939 it was found in the Rideau Canal. In the '50's it was found in nearby parts of the Rideau River and much further away, down the Ottawa River at Oka and around Montreal. In the '60's it turned up on the Ottawa River between Ottawa and Montebello, on the St. Lawrence River as far down as Lake St. Peter, and on the Rideau River up to Merrickville. Since then, the major geographical extension of its Canadian range has been to parts of the St. Lawrence River between Gananoque and Brockville.

Part of the key to the growth of the frog-bit's range is its method of reproduction. While its flowers may occasionally produce seeds, the plants reproduce vegetatively by means of small buds called turions. These turions separate from the plant in the fall, sink to the bottom for the winter, then rise in the spring to the surface and drift off to start new plants. Hence it is easy to see the plant propagating downstream in a river or canal as it did from the Experimental Farm to the Rideau Canal and nearby parts of the Ottawa River. The occurrences near Montreal could conceivably be derived from Ottawa. However, since these plants were found there some years before they were seen on the Ottawa River, and since frog-bit seems to have been cultivated at the Montreal Botanic Gardens, the possibility of a local introduction at Montreal must be considered.

Another part of the key may be man's activities. Certainly man brought the European Frog-bit to North America deliberately, possibly several times, and he may have casually transplanted it. However, he may also have unknowingly carried the turions on his boats, perhaps on the anchors and ropes. Such a process could account for its progress up the Rideau River.

So far, the sites mentioned have been on navigable waterways where currents or boats may carry the plant. Recently, however, several locations have been found which are not downstream from the previously known sites and which are rarely, if ever, visited by boats. Dore mentioned that the frog-bit had been found on the very shallow Brassils Creek in 1965 at a point some 75 feet higher in elevation than the Rideau River, which it enters a few miles above Becketts Landing. This loca-

tion, together with some beaver ponds near Manotick mentioned to me by Gray Merriam and the pond on the Anderson Road, all raise further questions about the methods of propagation of this plant. Deliberate human transplantation to these sites is not too probable. Canoes have been put in some of these waters but presumably not very often. Beavers might accidentally carry parts of the plant for short distances. The chances of waterfowl carrying turions seems small, but they could cover considerable distance.

The distribution and method of propagation of the European Frog-bit could be of some importance. The plant can form large, thick masses of vegetation on the surface of still waters. Dore has suggested that it will add to the burden of the weed dredges required to keep the Rideau system navigable. It has also been suggested by Merriam that the frog-bit, which grows rapidly in the summer and then dies and sinks in the fall, could cause an accelerated filling in of the beaver ponds where it occurs.-

No doubt the European Frog-bit is growing in other places where it has not yet been discovered, and very probably it will colonize still other places. I would be interested in hearing from people who see this plant, especially if it is in more remote waters. It would also be useful to know if all the flowers in a colony are of one sex or if fruit is produced.

Right:

The Anderson Road pond with European Frog-bit in the foreground.

Photos by the author



from: FISHES OF CANADA'S NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION  
by D. E. McAllister and B. W. Coad

BROOK STICKLEBACK *Culaea inconstans* (Kirtland)

Distinguishing features Brook stickleback can be distinguished from other fishes in the area by the 4-5 short isolated spines on its back and the dark colored body with light spots.

Description Body oval shape. Eyes large and small jaws upturned. Body depth enters standard length 3.8-4.8 times, head length 3.1-3.8 times. Five isolated short spines, sometimes 4, shorter than eye diameter, found on back. There are 9-11 soft rays in dorsal fin. One small spine precedes 9-11 soft rays in anal fin. Pelvic fins consist of 1 short sharp spine and 1 soft ray. There are 10, sometimes 11, rays in the pectoral fin. First gill arch has 10-14 slender gill rakers. No scales, plates, or keel are evident along sides of body. Body dark olive-green with light spots. Dorsal spines often dark. Maximum total length in the area 2.1 inches, elsewhere to 3.5 inches. Described from 22 specimens.

Origin Following glaciation the brook stickleback probably invaded the area via the Great Lakes from a Mississippian refugium.

Biology In the region brook stickleback are found in clear water or tea-colored bog water over mud bottoms, but sometimes over detritus, sand, gravel or rocks. They prefer small, slow streams or still waters of small lakes or bogs, where there is usually vegetation. Elsewhere in Ontario spawning has been reported the beginning of July. Nests are built of bits of grass or algae on stems of reeds or grass near or on the bottom. Round nests, nearly 25 mm in diameter, are glued together by the male with a kidney secretion. The male, who assumes a black color during the reproductive period, induces the female to lay eggs, then fertilizes and fans them with his pectoral fins. Eggs and young are guarded until they can fend for themselves. Food consists of insect larvae, small crustaceans, worms, and snails. (D.E.M.)

Source: The National Museum of Natural Sciences of the National Museums of Canada. Reproduced by permission of Information Canada and N.M.N.S.



MANY THANKS to those members who passed on T & L's and C F N's they no longer needed. Here's what we have done with some of the T & L's. For posterity we thought it important that the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI, formerly the National Sciences Library) maintain a complete set of T & L instead of keeping only two current years as it had been doing. So we got CISTI to change its policy and to shelve T & L as a journal. Then we provided issues back to 1967.

The other sets were given to school libraries - one in an intermediate school (Henry Munro) and the other in a high school (Colonel By) - where they were received with appreciation.

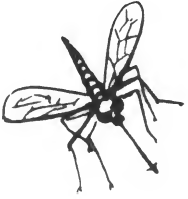
Are there other members who have back issues they no longer use? Phone Joyce Reddoch, 749-5363, for information on recycling them.

#### ENERGY CONSERVATION MUSEUM to open in Ottawa

Pollution Probe Ottawa will use their \$2,500 grant from Imperial Tobacco Environment Program to partially fund the Community Museum of Energy Conservation. The Museum will aim to explain the urgent need for energy conservation and wise energy policies; will offer practical suggestions on ways of conserving energy and of using renewable energy sources; will supply information on consumer products of low energy input; and will serve as a forum where citizens can exchange ideas on energy conservation and renewable energy resources.

Two of the many displays which will be included in the Energy Museum are: explanatory cut-away models of supplementary energy systems depicting the technology associated with solar energy, wind energy, heat pumps and greenhouses; and a display of examples of low cost, do-it-yourself supplementary energy systems and conservation measures, such as a solar water heater for cottages, oil drum windmills, and home insulation.

For more information on this project, contact Pollution Probe, Ottawa, 53 Queen Street, Ottawa K1P 5C5.



# get the point?

Stew Hamill

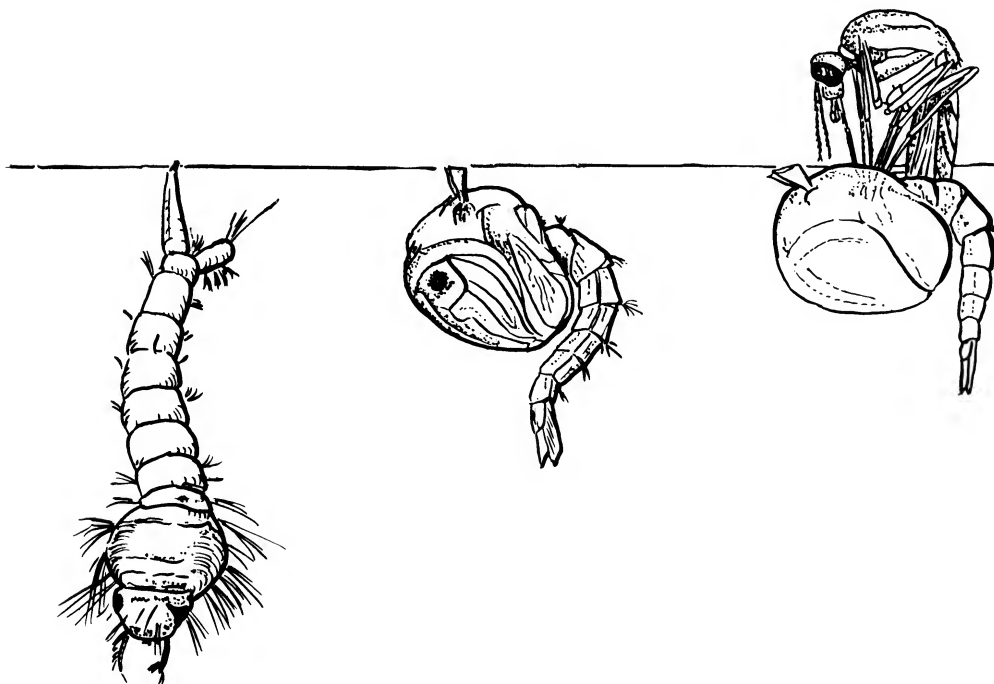
The ubiquitous mosquito is a major factor preventing greater appreciation of our natural areas during the summer. Its bite arouses cries for chemical control programs and wetland drainage schemes. Perhaps a little more knowledge about this pest would direct our energies into programs which have more effects on the problem and fewer impacts on the environment.

A mosquito begins life as an egg which the female lays in water or on dry land which she somehow knows will soon be flooded. Just about any water will do - in tin cans or old tires left by careless homeowners, or in ditches and ponds - as long as it is standing; large, open lakes and flowing streams are unsuitable. It may be as little as 24 hours or as long as an entire winter before a larva or wriggler hatches. After feeding on debris and shedding its skin several times, it changes to a pupa. The pupa does not feed, but hangs from the undersurface of the water until the adult emerges. Both sexes of the adult feed on plant juices and nectar for a few days, then mate. The females of most species then turn Dracula, seeking out blood meals to nourish their developing eggs.

There are many species of mosquitoes in the National Capital Region. Some are abundant in early spring, others in late summer; some have only one generation per year, others have several. All mosquitoes, however, are similar in requiring moisture - standing water for the egg, larva, and pupa, moist conditions for the adult. A warm, wet summer provides ideal conditions for mass involuntary blood donations.

One species of mosquito, Culex pipiens, is of particular concern because it has been identified as the carrier of St. Louis encephalitis, a disease which

appeared in Winnipeg and Windsor last year. This bird disease is caused by a virus which is transmitted from one bird to another or to a human by the bite of an infected mosquito. C. pipiens is not common in the National Capital Region because the adults have difficulty living through our cold winters; those which do survive normally bite only birds. These factors led



Dr. Douglas of the Regional Health Unit to believe that the chances of an encephalitis outbreak in this region are low.

There are three approaches to the mosquito problem which we can take - personal protection, removal of habitat, and kill programs.

The simplest method is to completely ignore the attacking mosquitoes. I don't recommend this to any but the most masochistic, but it does work. After a number of bites, you will develop an immunity and no



longer notice the bites. A little alcohol applied internally before beginning this procedure is said to decrease the discomfort. A more suitable method is to protect yourself with proper clothing (bright colours are less attractive to mosquitoes than dark) and insect repellents.

The mosquito nuisance could be greatly reduced by removing suitable breeding sites. By cleaning ditches and eavestroughs and by emptying water-filled containers, the density of mosquitoes (especially Culex pipiens) around urban areas would be decreased. The draining of swamps and marshes would also remove breeding habitat, but wildlife such as ducks and muskrats, which many people consider to be important components of our environment, would be driven away.

The use of insecticides to control mosquitoes can have substantial results if properly organized. Programs to locate breeding sites and kill the larvae are most effective; killing adults by fogging can give only temporary relief. In the situation of an encephalitis outbreak, larviciding programs are recommended to rapidly reduce the number of potential virus-carrying mosquitoes. Insecticides, however, affect other organisms besides the target - dragonflies may be killed by a chemical applied to control mosquitoes and other insects; its removal might cause outbreaks of other pests. Insecticides are also known to be passed from one animal to another up the food chain, causing egg-shell thinning in hawks and even appearing in humans with effects still unknown.

We should remember that the mosquito has an important role to play in our ecosystems by providing an intermediate step in food chains. All stages in the life history provide food for other animals, such as dragonflies, fish, swallows and bats. Our efforts at control should be aimed not at general eradication programs, but at selective measures (such as personal protection) which will have the most suitable results.

The above article appeared in the  
NCC newsletter "The Circuit" in May 1976.



# Henry Ami's OFNC Papers

Joyce Reddoch

Mr Hoyes Lloyd, a long-time member and a former President, has passed on to the Club some of Dr. Henry Ami's papers and lantern slides. Following Dr. Ami's death in 1931, Mrs. Ami gave this material to the Club. It was transferred to the late Mrs. Wilmot Lloyd for safe-keeping.

The papers consist of reports and letters accumulated by Dr. Ami during his 30 years of close association with the activities of the Club, which he joined soon after its founding. He was President in the years 1899 - 1901 and was Editor of The Ottawa Naturalist from 1895 to 1900. Thus we find notices of Council meetings, announcements of excursions, hand-written accounts of annual meetings and reports of the Geological Branch of the Club, a 1908 newspaper featuring the Club and its officials, and manuscripts and correspondence relating to the operation of The Ottawa Naturalist.

The lantern slides are also of enormous interest and value. They date from the turn of the century and show OFNC members on outings, scenes of favorite excursion spots, and many sites of geological interest in the Ottawa area. The slide collection was used on at least two occasions by Mr. Lloyd in addressing the Club.

We are grateful to the Lloyds for preserving this valuable material and to Mr. Lloyd for handing it over to us in time for the Club's centennial in 1979. The material is being catalogued now and will be available to the Club for display purposes. Its ultimate place will be in the Public Archives of Canada so that it will always be available to interested researchers.



Dr. HENRY AMI 1858 - 1931

OFNC President 1899 - 1901 Photograph taken in 1897  
Public Archives Canada (Topley # 74403E)



Dr. Henry Ami with Bill Powell and Graham Avery. The photograph was taken by Dr. James Fletcher on the shores of the Ottawa River below Rockcliffe. Both boys were killed in World War I.



Dr. Henry Ami at Harrington River, N.S.

Ami Collection/G. C. Bayly prints

HENRY MARC AMI was born on November 23, 1858 at Belle Rivière, Quebec, a son of Rev. Marc Ami, a Swiss Huguenot, and his wife, Anne, a native of France. The family came to Ottawa in 1867 when the French Canadian Missionary Society sent Rev. Ami to organize a French Protestant congregation (L'Eglise Saint-Marc Presbyterian).

Henry's early education was from private tutors and from the Ottawa Collegiate Institute (Lisgar Collegiate). University degrees from McGill followed: B.A. with honours in 1882, and M.A. in 1885. His interest in geology was inspired by Sir William Dawson, then Principal of the university.

From 1882 to 1910 Dr. Ami was involved in palaeontological studies throughout Canada for the Geological Survey of Canada. He became an internationally recognized authority on the fossils of the Paleozoic era, especially of the Silurian and Ordovician periods. His work was outstanding for its extent and its thoroughness; the fossils he collected are now in the National Museum. (Among his collections is one of 500 specimens of fossil fish from the Pleistocene clays of the Ottawa Valley. He also found and described the skeleton of a fossil seal from the same deposits.) For his achievements he received honorary doctorates from Queen's University in 1892 and from McGill in 1907.

Although he was a specialist in paleontology, his knowledge of other fields of natural science was extensive. He made collections and gave popular lectures in entomology, conchology, botany and astronomy. It is for his vast knowledge and for his interest in sharing it at OFNC outings and lectures that he was best remembered by Club members.

After his retirement in 1910, Dr. Ami continued to write and to promote natural science in general. He became fascinated with the search for fossil man; after World War I he devoted his full attention to this work in the south of France.

Dr. Ami died at Mentone, France, on January 4, 1931, and was buried in Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa on February 27, 1931.

## ADDITIONAL FACTS ABOUT THE HISTORICAL BOULDERS

Joyce Reddoch

After the previous article on Historical Boulders had gone to press (page 68), an additional and important source of information was uncovered. It is the article Roadside Markers by E. M. Kindle in the March, 1931 issue of The Canadian Field-Naturalist. Dr. Kindle summarizes the post-glacial history of the area and relates why the Club was motivated to place the boulders (as "geological finger boards"). He also tells us that the boulders were "cement facsimiles of a glacial boulder". (We had been suspicious about whether the boulders were natural or not.) There were plans to place a third



The uppermost layer is the marl bed, lying on marine sands. The marl is 20 feet above the present level of McKay Lake; it was formed on the bottom of the much higher lake of Pleistocene times.

H. M. Ami Collection / G. C. Bayly print

marker "on the Kingsmere road indicating the exact position of the highest Pleistocene sea beach formed during the last marine submergence of the Ottawa valley"; however, I can't find any evidence that this was done.

I have also found out that the marl was converted to bricks at a brickyard northwest of McKay Lake, beginning in 1872. The yard was operated by Thomas Clark, a son-in-law of Thomas MacKay. The old Russell Hotel was built of these bricks.



# SPRING 1976 BIRDS

Roger A. Foxall

Bird migration is influenced to a large extent by weather patterns; unusual weather generally results in rare or unusual birds, record early arrivals or record late departures. As the spring of 1976 was one of marked contrasts in weather, the migration was characterized by unusual timing. An overly warm Easter weekend got many species moving much earlier than normal. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird and a Wood Thrush, both recorded on April 18, won the prizes for early arrival. This vanguard was slowed effectively by a cold end to April and a frigid start to May. With a sprinkling of snow on May 19, followed by excessive heat and humidity by May 26, the bulk of the migration seemed short indeed.

Unfortunately the marked contrasts in weather failed to provide many rare species; most of the season's rarities preferred Kingston or Montreal. However, the season did produce two Cattle Egrets on April 25, seen near Shirley's Bay, the fourth record of Glossy Ibis on May 27, Yellow Rails on May 29 (more about these later), the second record of Sandhill Crane on May 21 when two were seen near Kanata, and an immature Little Gull on May 28 and 29.

The spring migration of waterfowl produced few surprises. The Canada Geese moved through about 10 days earlier than last year, with the peak on or about May 1st; relatively few were seen after the first week of May. The far more erratic Brant Geese were fairly common - almost 200 were seen in various flocks between May 23 and 29. Two Whistling Swans, one on April 17 and another on May 20 were most welcome visitors. The Ruddy Duck, until recently a rarity in our area, was fairly common at Shirley's Bay with up to 20 being seen between April 16 and 29.

The hawk migration passed through routinely, although Turkey Vultures were easier to find; 5 seen over Dunrobin ridge within one hour on April 10 was unprecedented. A total of 3 Golden Eagles in spring was similarly unprecedented. Following the sighting of one on March 27, one was seen on April 16 and yet another on April 25.

Undoubtedly the biggest event of the season was the discovery of Yellow Rails in Richmond Marsh. Although much of this saga occurred during June, the story began on May 29 when Bruce Dilabio heard one bird calling from the marsh. This exciting discovery prompted most of Ottawa's keen birders (and one OFNC excursion) to walk the two miles of railway track leading to the area. Nocturnal visits provided the most success and up to 17 birds were heard. An early morning tramp through the marsh itself rewarded some with several sightings of this infamously elusive species, one of the most sought-after by birders across North America. Unfortunately later visits were less successful and it now seems possible that the birds were only migrating through our area, contrary to the hopes of many.



Increasingly the spring migration of shorebirds through our area provides interesting and significant records. This year more Purple Sandpipers were seen than in all previous springs combined. A total of up to 8 were found between May 18 and 29; except for one at Britannia, all were on the dyke at Shirley's Bay. Other notable records were of 60 Knots on May 18, two Pectoral Sandpipers on May 25, two White-rumped Sandpipers on May 23, and a record count of 11 Wilson's Phalaropes in one day in mid-May.

In addition to the Little Gull on May 28 and 29, two adult Franklin's Gulls on May 18 were welcome rarities. The northern white-winged gulls were both later and more numerous than normal. At least 10 Glaucous Gulls were reported; one on May 29 was extremely late. An Iceland Gull on May 9 was also unexpected.

To most observers spring migration is synonymous with warblers darting colourfully amongst the trees and shrubbery of city parks and backyards. The contrasting weather patterns of 1976 produced good concentrations, albeit over a seemingly short period from about May 9 to 26. Vincent Massey Park was once again an excellent spot. The continuing spread of spruce budworm through the boreal forest is producing increased numbers of several species, in particular Bay-breasted, Cape May and Tennessee. Cape May were present in obvious force about May 13-15 and Tennessees were extremely common on May 13 and again on the 23rd. The beautifully plumaged Blackburnian Warblers seemed more common than normal and the number of Palm Warblers on May 13 was far greater than for several years. The warbler migration always produces a rarity or two. This year's contributions included Ceruleans on May 12 and 22nd, a Hooded on May 29 and a Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) on May 12.

The spring of 1976 was in general unspectacular with respect to the unusual, but let us not forget that it is the usual that makes migration a natural miracle. In Ottawa we are fortunate enough to have species migrating through our area during all but about seven weeks of the year. Already at the time of writing (June 30), Solitary Sandpipers and Lesser Yellowlegs have appeared at the sewage lagoons. The reverse movement has already begun!

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

E A R L Y      F A L L      P R O G R A M

arranged by the Excursions and Lectures Committee  
Roger Taylor (731-9270), Chairman

BIRDS IN FALL MIGRATION

Sunday 12 Sept. Leader: Monty Brigham (777-1675)  
Saturday 18 Sept. Leader: Arnet Sheppard (722-0991)  
Sunday 26 Sept. Leader: Roger Foxall (745-7791)  
Saturday 2 Oct. Leader: Brian Morin (824-8606)  
Sunday 10 Oct. Leader: Stephen O'Donnell (737-5270)

Meet: Britannia Drive-in Theatre  
Time: 7:30 a.m.

Tuesday  
14 Sept.

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING  
LAND ACQUISITION BY THE OFNC - PROS & CONS

Organizer: G.A. Neville (729-0579)  
Meet: Activity Centre, National Museum  
of Man, Metcalfe and MacLeod  
Time: 8:00 p.m.

A panel discussion concerning the feasibility of the acquisition of land by the OFNC. Proposals concerning the acquisition, use and management of specific tracts should be communicated to Dr. Neville before the meeting. Interested persons, for or against, are urged to attend. Moderator: Don Smith, Biology Dept., Carleton University  
Panelists: Philip T. Nation, Kingston Field-Naturalists' Club

Malcolm D. Kirk (Guelph), Environmental  
Planner, Ontario Ministry of Environment  
Don Graham, President, D.W. Graham Associates,  
Landscape Architects, Ottawa  
Martin Parker, Park Naturalist, McGregor  
Point Provincial Park  
Mike Singleton, Federation of Ontario  
Naturalists

Sunday  
3 October

## FALL MUSHROOMS

Leader: Gilles Patenaude (741-6886)  
Meet: Supreme Court, Wellington Street  
Time: 9:00 a.m.

Morning trip; bring a snack

Tuesday  
12 October

## OFNC MONTHLY MEETING LOCAL FOSSILS

Speaker: Janette Dean  
Meet: Activity Centre, National Museum  
of Man, Metcalfe and MacLeod  
Time: 8:00 p.m.

Sunday  
17 October

## PALAEONTOLOGICAL FIELD TRIP

Leader: Janette Dean (728-2004)  
Meet: Loblows, Carlingwood Shopping  
Centre  
Time: 8:30 a.m.

Morning trip; bring a snack and a hammer

ISSN 0041-0748

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

published by

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB

Second Class Mail - Registration Number 2777

Postage paid in cash at Ottawa

Change of Address Notices and undeliverable Copies:

Box 3264 Postal Station C, Ottawa, Ont.

K1Y 4J5

Return postage guaranteed



Lithographed by  
John Marquardt, Printer